

Collaborate Barrie Situation Table

Providing community care for those at acute risk

Agency: Barrie Police Service,
Ontario, Canada

Trial Period:
11/15/2018–06/15/2020

Pracademics*: Rich Johnston,
Danielle Hutchinson

Context

Community members are considered to be at acutely elevated risk (AER) if they have a multitude of risk factors that put them at high risk of imminent harm. Reducing their risk of harm may require a coordinated response from multiple agencies.

Key Finding

This small randomized controlled trial found that, among community members who presented with AER, those who were assigned to receive services through the Situation Table had fewer police interactions in the 12-month followup period than would have been anticipated in the absence of the intervention. A difference-in-differences estimate shows that those assigned to the Situation Table had, on average, 5.4 fewer followup police contacts compared with people in the control condition ($p < 0.1$).

*BetaGov trains agency personnel to become research-savvy "Pracademics" who lead trials.

Background

A "Situation Table" aims to proactively address the acute needs of community members who present acute elevated risk (AER)—multiple risk factors that put them or other community members at risk of imminent harm—through a coordinated response. Collaborating agencies, including law enforcement, first responders, child services, behavioral health, probation/parole, social services, health and human services, and community advocacy groups, meet to review situations in which imminent harm has been identified. The group determines which agency(ies) will be responsible for providing interventions. The Collaborate Barrie (CB) Situation Table was launched in June 2015.

Trial Design

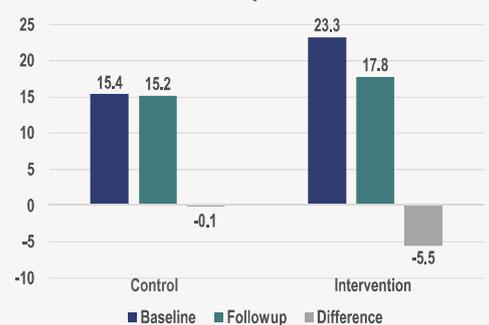
This pragmatic field test assessed the Situation Table approach with a small randomized controlled trial. The intervention group received services through the CB Situation Table, and the control group were managed with routine practices outside of the Situation Table but were waitlisted for Situation Table services. Assistance was offered to but not mandated for those in the intervention group. Participants were followed for 12 months.

Results

Thirty-eight people meeting study criteria were randomly assigned to intervention ($n=20$) and control ($n=18$) conditions. One person (control), incarcerated on a lengthy sentence prior to study entry, was removed from analyses. There were no meaningful group differences by age or sex. There were significant differences in justice involvement in the 12-months prior to study entry (baseline): those in the intervention condition

averaged twice as many police encounters and arrests as those in control. Outliers of number of police encounters were removed from analyses (2 at baseline; 1 at follow-up). Findings from a difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis demonstrate that people assigned to the intervention had significantly fewer subsequent police contacts than expected based on baseline numbers (5.4; $p = 0.07$). The figure below shows the unadjusted means of police encounters at baseline (12-months prior), at followup (12-months post), and the difference (followup minus baseline). A regression analysis controlling for gender, age, risk factors, and intervention condition also found a statistically significant reduction in the difference in number of police encounters for those in the intervention condition.

**Police Encounters:
Baseline, Followup, and Difference**



Conclusion

This pragmatic field experiment provides the first test of the Situation Table strategy. Findings are promising, but the study has several limitations. A larger experimental test is justified.

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